

REMARKS

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-3 as being obvious over Stein, 5,394,506 in view of Leonard, 5,937,140 and Ming GB 2,338,610.

The Examiner states that Stein teaches a heat activated air freshener system including a mail insert 32 plug that is inserted into a cigarette lighter and an air freshener 42. See Figure 3. Stein does not disclose an opening which allows for plugs of other devices.

Stein relates to a fragrance dispenser for a vehicle, that utilizes the automobile's cigarette lighter as a heating source. The fragrance dispenser includes a housing for plugging it into the cigarette lighter socket and a wedge-shaped divergent housing that has a open top portion that allows for dispensing of the fragrance, while at the same time providing visual inspection of the remaining material. The system uses a replaceable cartridge of a volatile fragrance emitting material. The cigarette lighter socket heats the fragrance producing material.

However, the concept of an air freshener having a receptacle for the plug of another device is known in the art. Leonard teaches an air freshener diffuser for a standard wall outlet which all incorporates a "plug-through" feature so that an outlet is not lost when using the device. See col. 5 lines 20-31.

Leonard relates to a plug-in diffuser, for use with a substance to be thermally diffused, includes first and second electrical assemblies, each including a male terminal and a female terminal electrically connected to the male

terminal. A receptacle holds the substance, and a heating element is connected between the first and second terminal assemblies for heating the substance held in the receptacle when the diffuser is plugged into an electrical outlet via the male terminals. The female terminals cooperate to form an electrical socket into which an external device can be plugged. Leonard describes in the description of related art, prongs plugged into a wall socket. It further describes the device being well suited for kitchens and bathrooms. Leonard teaches a plug-in diffuser with a plug-through electrical connector. In a preferred embodiment, the female terminals cooperate to form an electrical socket into which an external electrical device can be plugged. A first terminal assembly can be provided, including a male terminal extending from the first stage main body and from the outer casing, and a first female terminal encased within the first stage main body and being electrically connected to the first male terminal. A second female terminal is encased in the first stage main body. A second male terminal extends from the subassembly housing and from the casing.

Col. 8 lines 18-21 states "The plug-in diffuser electrical connector of the invention can be used wherever it is desirable to provide a plug-in diffuser in which another device can be plugged into the wall outlet through the diffuser. "

In addition, Ming discloses an adapter 17 for a cigarette lighter that may have two or more sockets 53, 55, 57 for additional devices, such as cell phones. See Abstract and Figure 4.

Ming relates to a cigarette lighter socket adapter with improved contact, dual sockets and/or movable plug. An adapter for a vehicle cigarette lighter socket has an end contact 19 of a plug part held in place by a ribbon spring 16 to reduce contact resistance. The adapter may have two or more sockets. The plug part 7 may be movable relative to the socket, either by being hinged onto a housing or by being connected at the end of a cable.

The invention provides an adapter for a vehicle cigarette lighter socket, the adapter comprising an adapter body, with at least one socket member and an elongate plug member attached to said adapter body, the elongate plug member having a first electrical contact at an end of said elongate plug member, the first electrical contact being electrically connected to the adapter via a ribbon form spring contact.

As many appliances can be powered from the lighter socket, it is preferable if the adapter body comprises at least two socket members. According to a second aspect, the invention provides an adapter for a vehicle lighter socket, the adapter comprising an adapter body, with at least two socket members and a single elongate plug member attached to said adapter body, wherein the socket members are electrically connected to said plug member.

The single elongate plug member is for insertion into the single vehicle lighter socket and two appliances can be powered from the first and second socket members. Ming states that the actual socket acquired to provide power to a cigarette lighter cap is more complicated than a socket required just to give

power. Conventional cigarette lighter sockets are a female type member with cylindrical walls and a flat socket base. The terminal is provided by part of the inside of the cylindrical walls and the second terminal is a piece of metal fixed at the bottom of the socket. The metal piece is shaped so that it extends partially up the cylindrical walls. The first and second terminals must be isolated from one another.

In an embodiment, there is at least one socket member and a single elongate plug member attached to said adapter body, wherein the at least one of the socket members is electrically connected to said plug member and said plug member is movable relative to the adapter body. The elongate plug can be connected to the adapter body via a flexible lead.

As it was known in the art at the time of the invention to provide a fragrance diffuser with additional sockets so as to avoid losing an outlet when using the device as evidenced by Leonard, it would have been obvious to do the same in the invention of Stein by providing additional sockets in the manner of Ming.

With respect to the shape of the freshener, it has been well-established that the choice of shape in a device is generally not significant or patentable where it relates to mere aesthetics.

Claim 1 is not obvious over Stein in view of Leonard and Ming. Although Stein relates to a fragrance dispenser for a vehicle, it does not allow for plugins for other devices. In fact, the shape of Stein which is taught in the patent as a

wedged shaped divergent housing, would not allow for a plugin. The Examiner wishes to add the teaching of Leonard. Leonard teaches a plugin diffuser for providing a scent to a room, however, Leonard specifically discusses using the device at a person's home. In fact, as stated above, the device described in Leonard uses prongs plugged into a wall socket. Therefore, there would be no teaching to combine Stein and Leonard. Further, with regards to Ming, Ming teaches an adapter having two or more sockets for additional devices, but none of these devices relate to an air freshener. The devices described relate to cell phones or other similar devices. Further, Ming discusses the difference between cigarette lighter mechanisms and sockets again describing the difference what is taught in Ming and what is taught in Leonard.

Therefore, claim 1 is not obvious over Stein in view of Leonard and Ming.

The Examiner has rejected claim 4 as being obvious over Stein, Leonard and Ming as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Abrahamian, 5,762,665.

The combination fails to teach an extension cord or fan. Abrahamian, however discloses a vehicle air freshener that plugs into a vehicle cigarette lighter and which features both an extension cord 70 and a fan 62. As the extension cord 70 of Abrahamian permits the device to be clipped in a desirable location, it would have been an obvious modification to the air freshener of Stein. Moreover, as the fan 62 of Abrahamian allows improved dispersion of the

fragrance from the filters, it would have been an obvious addition to the combination.

Abrahamian relates to a vehicular air purification system for use with a vehicle having a ventilation system with a plurality of output vents. Included is an active filter unit housing with a rectilinear configuration having a closed top face, a closed bottom face, a front face, a rear face, and a pair of closed side faces defining an interior space. The rear face and the front face both have a plurality of horizontal ventilation slots. One of the faces of the active filter unit housing has a clip adapted to allow the active filter unit housing to be removably attached within the vehicle. The motor has a rotor coaxially coupled within the stator with a fan coupled thereto for rotating upon the receipt of power by the motor. Further included is a vehicle cigarette lighter power adapter and a connection wire coupled between contacts of the power adapter and the motor. A first filter is coupled to the active filter unit housing for filtering air passing between the front and rear faces thereof.

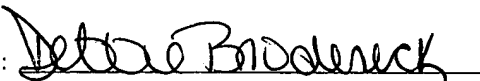
Col. 5 lines 54-61 states "Next provided is a motor 60 having a stator fixedly coupled within the annular members of the motor support, as shown in Fig. 2. When fixed in place, an axis defined by the motor is positioned perpendicularly with respect to the front face and the rear face of the active filter unit housing. Another component of the motor is a rotor coaxially coupled within the stator with a four-vaned fan 62 coupled thereto for rotating upon the receipt of power by the motor.

For transferring power to the motor and fan, a connection wire 70 is coupled between the contacts of the power adapter and the motor. The connection wire are situated through an aperture formed in the bottom face of the active filter unit housing with an associated elongated grommet 72 encompassing a portion thereof. The connection wire further includes an alligator clip 74 with a pair of opposing members pivotally coupled at central extents thereof. It should be understood that the alligator clip is critical for clamping to a portion of an interior of the vehicle thereby maintaining the connective wire out of view of the driver.

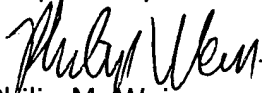
The fan described by Abrahamian is part of the motor. Further, the connection wire described by Abrahamian relates to a wire which is between the power adapter and the motor. Applicant has amended claim 4 to state that the external fan is attached to a extension cord. This is not taught by Abrahamian. Therefore, Claim 4 is not obvious over the prior art.

Applicant believes that the application is now in condition for allowance.

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